

Washington, DC-Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) today backed the passage of The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act in the House of Representatives, which includes \$4.2 million he secured for facilities at Camp Bullis. This bill funds the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Administration and continues funding for other agencies through March 2009. Additionally, the bill provides funding for emergency disaster relief. It passed by a bipartisan vote of 370-58.

“Funding military pay raises, BRAC additions and substantive VA programs to San Antonio and elsewhere in my district has been one of my top priorities because the investments in infrastructure, medical training and health care will play an important role in our community and our military for many years to come.”

A military pay raise from the budgeted 3.5 percent to 3.9 percent is included in the bill.

For San Antonio, the bill provides \$4.2 million for a Live Fire Exercise Shoothouse at Camp Bullis and \$8.8 billion for BRAC in fiscal year 2009 which begins in October of 2008. This project allows for soldiers and units to attain and maintain the greatest proficiency for live fire training in urban environments, training which many of our troops require in order to be the most prepared for service in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Funding for infrastructure at Camp Bullis strengthens the mission of the installation and preserves San Antonio as Military City, USA.

“As a result of BRAC, the San Antonio area economy will continue to be helped, our country will benefit from the talented professionals that will be trained here, and our military men and women will have the high quality health care and support they have earned and deserve,” said Rodriguez.

Also included in the bill secured or supported by Rodriguez is:

- \$3.2 million secured by Rodriguez for the further research in the Fire Resistant Fuels

program in order to reduce injuries to our troops.

- \$5.6 million secured by Rodriguez for Flashlight Soldier-to-Soldier Combat Identification System (FSCIS) project to prevent friendly fire fatalities.

- Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): The bill includes funding for the Rodriguez sponsored bill recently passed to provide a COLA increase based on the change in the Consumer Price Index to all compensation beneficiaries. The adjustment will be effective December 1, 2008.

- The bill increases category 8 enrollment by 10 percent. Category 8 veterans are those with no service-connected disabilities and with higher incomes levels

- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment: The bill includes language directing that no less than \$3.8 billion be spent on specialty mental health care. The committee expects that no less than \$584 million be spent on the Substance Abuse Treatment Program in Fiscal Year 2009.

- \$837.5 million for Urban Area Security Initiative grants at the Department of Homeland Security, which provides funding for activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of international terrorist attack (San Antonio received \$6,547,500 for 2008 FY).

- Other Homeland Security Grants include: \$775 million for firefighter grants, \$315 million for emergency management performance grants \$50 million for interoperable communications grants, and \$35 million for assistance for emergency operations centers.